

AN OLD FAN

he used to write me from jail and I'd write him back. he said that of all the writers he had written only Saroyan and I had written him back. he purchased my books and passed my newspaper columns around. that jail like anyplace else was full of writers and critics and like the rest of them some of them hated me. Harry the Moose defended me. he told them that even though I couldn't write a decent sentence I had done some time.

Harry came to see me when he got out, he came with another x-con who had gotten out a bit earlier. I was then living at my girlfriend's place and they stood in front of the fireplace looking at my girlfriend and running their zippers up and down. I had never asked what they had gone in for but that gave me the idea. they didn't stay long, they had their old ladies with them and their old ladies wanted to see Disneyland. they had jobs as carpenters and made more in 3 days than I made in a month. we shook hands and said goodbye.

I got a letter last week. Harry the Moose was back in. he said it was a parole violation. I believed him. when I was in a con told me: nobody's guilty in here." Harry wants to know where he can get my latest book. he's typing 12 hours a day in that cell. that's one thing about lock-up: you don't get many interruptions. I suppose Saroyan will answer him again and I will too. I'd rather have readers and friends in there than in Paris or heaven, now what in the hell did I do with his letter?

SHOOT ME IN THE LEG, SHOUTS THE SKY;
SOME GOOD SOUL DOES
AS THE SAWDUST FALLS
THROUGH --

2 men with blue arm bands meet me
outside my apartment house
door. they both wear guns and
carry ivory clubs:
"your rent has been raised to meet the
spiral. you owe us
\$32."
I pay. they give me a small
punched orange ticket
and I enter my
apartment.

the phone rings:

"Dept. of Water and Power. Sir,
your rates have been raised to meet the
spiral. unless you can reimburse us with
\$5 by 8 a.m.
your water and power will be
shut off."

I turn the t.v. off
I turn the lights off
and go to bed.

the city of Los Angeles can no longer
afford to light its streets
at night.

outside one can hear
occasional gunfire
but it's very
sparse.

the price of bullets is
prohibitive.

the prime interest rate
has been raised to
17 percent, a hotdog costs
a dollar and a quarter.

the states of Colorado, Nevada and
Washington have been
purchased by the People's Republic of
China.

my woman has left me for a
richer man.

KISS ME

kiss me like you kissed Sam,
I said.

kiss me like you kissed Liza,
she said.

kiss me like you kissed Kevin,
I said.

kiss me like you kissed Tully,
she said.

kiss me like you kissed -- that actor --
what's his name?
I said.